GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:203
ANSWERED ON:30.11.2016
Review of RTI Act
Misra Shri Pinaki

Will the Minister of PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has reviewed the working/implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the deficiencies noticed in the review and the corrective action taken thereon;

(c) the number of cases where RTI application was delayed for more than a year;

(d) the number of such cases which have been brought to the notice of the Central Information Commission (CIC) during the last three years and the current year and the action taken by CIC in such cases; and

(e) the number of cases where punishment, financial and otherwise awarded by CIC and the compliance thereof during the above period?

Answer

Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office. (DR. JITENDRA SINGH)
(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 203 BY SHRI PINAKI MISRA FOR 30.11.2016 REGARDING 'REVIEW OF RTI ACT'
(a) & (b) Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 mandates timely response to citizen's request for information. RTI Act, 2005 provides for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority.

Review of the implementation of the provisions of RTI Act is an on-going process. During review from time to time, the issues and constraints that have been noted inter-alia include, (i) lack of awareness on Right to Information, (ii) need for capacity building of various functionaries administering RTI Act, (iii) inconvenience experienced by citizens while filing information requests/appeals manually including payment of RTI fee, (iv) need for proactive disclosure by various Public Authorities (PAs) suo-motu as per Section 4 of the Act.

There have been constant efforts on part of the Government to further streamline and strengthen the existing mechanisms for successful and effective implementation of the RTI Act. Government has taken several steps to strengthen the regime of RTI Act, which inter-alia include the following:

i. RTI web portal www.rtionline.gov.in was launched w.e.f. 21st August, 2013 to facilitate citizens for filing online RTI applications and first appeals with the facility of online payment of RTI fees. Due to concerted efforts by the Government, the number of Public Authorities aligned to this portal has gone up from 96 in 2013-14 to 1203 as on 28.11.2016.
ii. RTI online portal has provided the facility to citizens for filing applications and first appeals in Hindi language also.
iii. A number of workshops/training programme have been organised for the Nodal Officers, Central Public Information Officers (CPIOs), First Appellate Authorities (FAAs) and other officials of Public Authorities to effectively implement the RTI online web portal.
iv. Training programme on capacity building and awareness generation have been undertaken for Public Information Officers (PIOs), First Appellate Authorities (FAAs) through State Government Training Institutes so as to enable them to supply information/dispose of first appeal effectively.
v. Directions have been issued to all Ministries/Departments and other Public Authorities to proactively work towards suo-motu disclosure and upload more information on their websites so as to reduce the need for filing RTI applications.
vi. The Central Information Commission (CIC), at present, is working in its full strength i.e. with one Chief Information Commissioner and 10 Information Commissioners (ICs) thereby improving its effectiveness.
vii. To enable speedy disposal of Appeals/Complaints, the CIC has launched e-Court of the CIC allowing online filing of appeals/complaints, case disposals, status tracking, issue of notice of hearing using latest technology and efficient management of the Commission's records.
viii. The Government has sanctioned Rs.42.54 crores for construction of a new building for the CIC.

(c) to (e) The data regarding number cases where RTI application was delayed for more than a year is not centrally maintained. Further, as informed by the CIC, no such cases have been brought to the notice of the Commission.

The details of penalty imposed on the CPIOs for denying the information requested without any reasonable cause and the recovery made, are as under:

S.N. Year Penalty imposed (Rs.) Total Penalty recovered including pending recoveries of previous years (Rs.)

1. 2010-11 45,38,825 25,72,814
2. 2011-12 38,20,500 24,68,701
3. 2012-13 13,29,250 7,61,500
4. 2013-14 19,25,000 10,19,628
5. 2014-15 7,39,000 11,31,225